No. 1—21-33.

Extract from the Proceedings of the Government of India, in the Home Department (Sanitary),—under date Calcutta, the 21st January 1886.

READ—

Home Department Resolution No. 4—198-214, dated the 12th July 1882.
Ditto ditto No. 5—176-191, dated the 3rd July 1884.
Letter from Messrs. Thomas Cook and Son, dated the 10th October 1884.
Letter to Messrs. Thomas Cook and Son, No. 368, dated the 10th December 1884.
Letter to Messrs. Thomas Cook and Son, No. 312, dated the 18th October 1885.
Letter from J. M. Cook, Esq., No. , dated the 22nd December 1885.
Letter to J. M. Cook, Esq., No. 4, dated the 6th January 1886.

RESOLUTION.

FOR several years past the attention of the Government of India has from time to time been directed to the desirability of alleviating, so far as is possible, the discomforts and sufferings experienced by Muhammadan pilgrims during the journey from India to the Hedjaz. The existence of these sufferings, more especially in the case of those of the poorer class of Muhammadans who undertake the pilgrimage, is an admitted fact; but the action taken with a view to afford relief has been necessarily of a restricted nature owing to the unwillingness felt by the Government to undertake any direct interference with what is considered to be a religious obligation by a large section of the Muhammadan community in India. In 1880 intimation was received from Her Majesty's Secretary of State that the Turkish Government had issued orders requiring passports from all passengers and pilgrims arriving in Jeddah, whether Turkish or foreign subjects, and announcing that those who came unprovided with such documents would be liable to be repelled from the ports of the Hedjaz. In order to render these Turkish Regulations as little irksome as possible to natives of India proceeding to the Hedjaz on pilgrimage, the Government of India, after consulting Local Governments and Administrations, resolved* to establish a system under which passports should be unconditionally given to every intending pilgrim, not only at the Indian ports of embarkation but also at the central stations of every district in British India and at the head-quarters of all Political Agencies in Native States. Arrangements were also made to grant informal passes to the subjects of other Governments, *e. g.*, natives of Kashgar, Russian Turkistan, Afghanistan, &c., who embark for Mecca from Indian ports, it being explained that these passes impose no responsibility on the Government of India in regard to the holders, and that the Governor General in Council could not in any way guarantee their recognition by the officials of the Turkish or any other Foreign Government. Further, in consideration of the very large number of pilgrims who annually embark at, and return to, Bombay, and to the necessity of making some special arrangements to meet their requirements, a Muhammadan Protector of Pilgrims was appointed at that port and instructed to supply intending pilgrims with all the information and assistance within his power in respect of every matter connected with the pilgrimage.

* Home Department Resolution No. 4—198-214, dated 12th July 1882.

2. Since the above measures were undertaken, further efforts have been made by the Government of India towards the proper regulation of the India pilgrim traffic by amending the provisions of the Native Passenger Ships Act (No. VIII of 1876) in certain important respects, and by revising the rules issued under that Act with reference to the fitting, provisioning, sanitary arrangements, &c., of pilgrim ships. These rules have been assimilated, as far as possible, with those in force for regulating the transport of emigrants to the French and British colonies, and have been widely circulated in the form of a "Manual for the guidance of officers and concerned in the Red Sea Pilgrim Traffic." It has been made obligatory on ships conveying more than 100 pilgrims to carry a qualified medical officer, and in order to promote the welfare of Indian pilgrims during their stay in the Hedjaz, an Indian Vice-Consul has been appointed at Jeddah, whose special duty it is to attend to the interests and well-being of pilgrims. In order further to afford protection and assistance to the pilgrims, especially in connection with their detention in quarantine under the orders of the Turkish Government, a Muhammadan Vice-Consul has been temporarily appointed for Hodeida and Camaran. A dispensary has also been established at Jeddah for affording relief to Indian pilgrims in the Hedjaz. Lastly, in order to regulate and bring under proper control the transactions of pilgrim-brokers in the City of Bombay, it is proposed to introduce a Bill into the local Legislative Council under which the business will in future be restricted to licensed persons; and certain penalties will be imposed for any breach of the terms of the license. The action hitherto taken cannot fail to have effected a substantial improvement in the position of pilgrims during the voyage to Jeddah and while staying in the Hedjaz.

In the course of the correspondence which has taken place with Her Majesty's Secretary of State on the subject, it was considered whether intending pilgrims should be required before proceeding on the voyage to deposit a sum of money sufficient to cover the cost of their return journey. The Government of India admitted that such a regulation would prevent much misery and suffering, but the opinion of the local authorities was opposed to interference of this nature on the ground that it might be misunderstood and misinterpreted, and the Governor General in Council accordingly decided that action of the kind was unadvisable. At the same time a public notice was issued in the English, Hindustani, and Persian languages warning persons who propose to undertake the pilgrimage of the difficulties to which they would be exposed owing to the imposition by the Turkish Government of quarantine for at least ten days at the Island of Camaran (during which period pilgrims are required to pay certain fees besides arranging for their own provisions), and impressing upon intending pilgrims the desirability of not starting unless provided with sufficient funds (at least Rs. 300) in order to meet the expenses of quarantine, of the journey from Jeddah to Mecca and back, and of the return journey to India.

3. In October 1884 a communication was received from Messrs. Thomas Cook and Son, expressing the readiness of that Firm to undertake the conveyance of pilgrims between India and Mecca. The extensive experience gained by Messrs. Cook and Son in connection with the requirements of schemes of a similar character, and the considerable degree of success which has attended their operations clearly pointed to that Firm as peculiarly qualified to assist the Government in still further regulating the conveyance of pilgrims between India and Arabia, and in placing the arrangements on a footing more satisfactory to the Government and more convenient to the pilgrims themselves than has hitherto been found possible. Messrs. Cook and Son were accordingly informed that if they were able to make the necessary arrangements, the Governor General in Council would be prepared to give them such assistance as might be within his power. Messrs. Cook and Son have now informed the Government of India of the conditions upon which they are prepared to undertake the agency and control of the conveyance of pilgrims to and from Jeddah, and the Governor General in Council, after careful consideration and personal communication with Mr. J. M. Cook, is of opinion that those conditions are such as may be accepted. The conditions contemplate the appointment of Messrs. Thomas Cook and Son to be pilgrim agents for the whole of India, local officers and officers in charge of treasuries being instructed to assist that Firm in making known the terms of through conveyance to Jeddah and back, and in disposing of through tickets. The Bombay Government will be requested to make over to the representatives of the Firm the issue of passports in Bombay after these have been signed by the proper authorities, and to instruct the Protector of Pilgrims to work in harmony with the Firm and to render it every possible assistance. On the other hand, Messrs. Thomas Cook and Son agree to arrange with the railway administrations, steam ship proprietors, and others concerned, for the conveyance of the pilgrims, at through fares, from all the chief stations in India to Jeddah and back, and to do all in their power to secure the transit of the pilgrims in satisfactory ships supplied with proper accommodation in accordance with the regulations laid down by the Government. They are prepared to provide the requisite agency for the work, Muhammadans being appointed for this purpose in all cases where necessary, to establish a special pilgrimage office in the most convenient position at Bombay, and possibly also at Jeddah, and to make all detailed arrangements in connection with the issue of the necessary announcements, forms of tickets, &c. Lastly, the Firm has expressed its readiness to comply with the requirements and regulations which may be laid down from time to time by the Government of India precisely in the same manner as though they were in the service of the Government.

4. The Governor General in Council feels convinced that a scheme of the nature above described cannot fail, if successfully carried out, to be productive of much benefit to Indian pilgrims to the Hedjaz, but if success is to be ensured, it is essential that every assistance should be afforded to Messrs. Cook and Son, not only by Local Governments and Administrations, but also by District and other officers upon whom it will devolve to give effect to the detailed arrangements. His Excellency in Council accordingly trusts that Local Governments and Administrations will see that this is done, and will direct local officers to co-operate in every possible manner with the representatives of the Firm in carrying on their operations.

ORDER.—Ordered, that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to all Local Governments and Administrations for information and guidance, and to the Foreign and Financial Departments for the issue of any further orders required. Also, that it be published in the *Gazette of India* and in all local Gazettes for general information. Local Governments are requested to arrange for its translation and publication in all Vernacular Gazettes.

(True Extract)
A. MACKENZIE,
Secy. to the Govt. of India.

Mysore Government Press, Bangalore.—1886.